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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [AORC](#) [KCRM](#) [PREL](#) [SNAR](#) [AU](#) [UN](#)
SUBJECT: ADVOCATING NEEDLE EXCHANGE AND MEDICATION-ASSISTED
THERAPY IN UNGASS

REF: A. STATE 10859
[1](#)B. UNVIE 54

Classified By: Classified by Charge Geoffrey Pyatt, for reasons 1.4 (b)
and (d).

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (SBU) Per Ref A instructions, Charge approached CND chair Ambassador Ashipala on Friday, Feb 6 to explain change in the USG position regarding the ongoing UNGASS review negotiations (Ref B). On the same day Missionoffs shared with Russia and Japan highlights of the new USG position: support for needle exchange programs as a method to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, and for medication-assisted therapy as part of a comprehensive treatment protocol against narcotic addiction, and continued USG opposition to the term "harm reduction" in UNGASS review documents (Ref B). On February 9 Missionoffs met with the countries most outspoken against harm reduction -- Russia, Japan and India -- to discuss more fully the USG position and to seek their view on incorporating these two demand reduction measures in the UNGASS documents. (Note: Colombia, another opponent to HR, was invited to the working lunch but did not attend. End note.)

[1](#)2. (SBU) On February 9, Missionoffs also met with Australia, Canada, Norway and Switzerland to brief them on the U.S. approach. On February 10 Missionoffs met with EU members and G-77 representatives (Pakistan and Argentina) to do the same. Missionoffs shared with them proposed language for the relevant paragraphs in the draft UNGASS political declaration and draft UNGASS action plan/annex to reflect the new USG position. On the margins of his meetings on other issues during the week, Charge also approached France, Sweden and Argentina to inform them of this new position and seek their support. On February 12, Charge gave remarks on the new USG position in an UNGASS meeting on the draft political declaration. Charge's statement is now posted on Mission's website <http://vienna.usmission.gov/090212-unodc-cnd.html>, and electronic and hard copies have been distributed to many delegations. END SUMMARY.

Reactions to New USG Position

[1](#)3. (SBU) During these consultations and in UNGASS meetings the week of February 9-13, we received a range of comments regarding our new position. Russia had communicated our position to Moscow and is awaiting instructions. Japan objects to mentioning "needle exchange" and proposed general terms such as "proper medical instruments." Norway wants a reference to the WHO/UNODC/UNAIDS technical guide. The EU, driven largely by the UK and Netherlands, insisted on having a separate paragraph (13bis) noting HIV/AIDS transmission and reaffirming commitment to implement UNGA A/Res/60/262, as

well as other references to this resolution throughout the draft declaration. (Note: A/Res/60/262 is the 2006 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS, which contains the words "harm-reduction efforts related to drug use" as one of the many prevention measures listed in para 22 of the 53-paragraph document. End Note.) Pakistan questioned whether we were negotiating a health or drug-control document. The EU said that they did not like (U.S.-proposed) specific references to needle exchange and medication-assisted therapy, and prefer a "general reference." (Note: we believe by "general," EU meant "harm reduction." End Note.) EU also objected to our specifying demand reduction as "prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation," insisting that if these elements were to be listed, then "harm reduction" should be listed as well.

¶4. (C) On February 9, India told us that the UK rep spoke to him that morning asking him to support "harm reduction." She reminded him that the UK had given \$200 million to "harm reduction" programs in India. The Indian rep said he was unable to verify this figure, and, even if the India government supported a well-defined "harm reduction" program (e.g., needle exchange) in a circumscribed setting (prison), that did not mean that India would support undefined "harm reduction" as international drug control policy. Pakistan also told us of having been approached in the same way by the UK, EC and other unspecified EU countries.

¶5. (SBU) On the margins of these consultations and meetings, EU chair Czech Republic and the European Commission (which has observer status at the Commission on Narcotic Drugs) asked for our support to achieve the EU goals for these UNGASS documents: (i) to improve the structure of these

two documents (the political declaration and the annex or action plan), including a "balance" between supply reduction and demand reduction, (ii) non-conditionality for alternative development, i.e., de-linking eradication from alternative development, and (iii) inclusion of the term "harm reduction" in the documents. The EU expressed willingness to compromise on the "harm reduction" term, e.g., referring to the substance without mentioning the words. Counselor told him that we would not accept the delinking between eradication and alternative development, and we would have to see their proposal on alternative language on "harm reduction." On February 11, EU proposed inserting a definition of the term, consistent with the three drug conventions somewhere in the text. (Note: Opponents to non-conditionality include the U.S., Colombia, Pakistan, and a number of GRULAC countries. EU is isolated in its position. End Note.)

¶6. (C) The Swedish ambassador, in his conversation with Charge, welcomed the US move, and indicated the EU consensus on handling "harm reduction" had broken down. His counselor told us on February 9 that Stockholm reacted favorably to our new position, and said that the American change should be "acknowledged" in some way in the documents. He also told us that in addition to Sweden, there were other EU countries--France and Italy--unhappy with the way the EU was going. He said that Stockholm might consider breaking consensus with the EU. When we spoke again on February 12, he sounded a more conciliatory note regarding the EU, highlighting that the three EU goals needed to be negotiated with the U.S. in a package.

Comment

¶7. (SBU) Reflecting the condition in the EU camp, during the February 12 meeting on the political declaration, the EU asked the chairperson to postpone discussion on the paragraphs related to "harm reduction," pending reaction from Brussels and the capitals. Still, the risk remains that the strongest EU supporters of "harm reduction" (basically the UK, Netherlands, and to a lesser degree, Germany) will hold the negotiations open in the hope that they can jam through their desired language once the ministerial opens in early

March. End Comment.

PYATT